

■ News / A4

P200M worth of property lost in Boracay fire

■ Magazine

Joy Virata: From shy housewife to respected actress



■ News / A2

GMA exhorts Fil-Ams to earn dollars abroad but retire in RP

JOB

Fire up your passion with the job that's right for you

Tanong ng Bayan / A16

Singil sa kuryente, dapat bang taasan?



An hour's work for soldiers adds up to P899,000 for kids

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Sunday, January 23, 2005 • 28 pages / vol. 20 / no. 48

No fireworks, just free spa, free golf at Trump wedding





FILIPINO OF THE YEAR 2004

FERNANDO POE JR.

Mourning an unfulfilled dream

AROUND this time last year Fernando Poe Jr. headed the campaign to be brave and did what no Filipino had done in quite a while. He gave the common folk hope.

'Get the big-time loggers'

Gov't told to go after big fish, not just local small fry

By Michael Lim Ubac, Joker Lukas Jovellano and Delfin Mallari Jr.



Bridge at Banahaw's foot stands test of time

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.

Islamic cleric urges all Muslims to reject terrorism

By Allan Mawal

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Party-list group sacks own nominee

'Retire in RP where dollars go a long way'

Poe 40th day rites somber

METRO

6/42 Luzon/Vis-Min

SWEEPSTAKES

₱4,616,119.20

₱100,000.00

FLOODS, TSUNAMIS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

A time for connecting and of healing



Offerings at dusk

Nothing personal

Interaction

WPD launches search for best whistle-blower

19 girls rescued from cyber exploitation



$1,000-earnings

Armed by computer

Human trafficking

METROBRIEFS

QC tax extension

Bus kills two kids

Ina Poon Bato feast

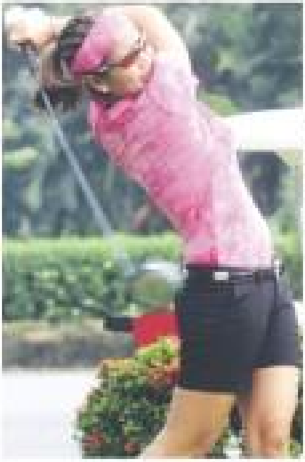
₱200M lost in fire; Boracay in darkness

'Rumors meant to sow dissent in AFP'



SMART GIRL

J-Ro set to ink rich promo deal



By Jong Arnaiz

JENNIFER Rosales is reportedly set to sign a megabuck endorsement deal with telecommunications giant Smart before she launches her campaign in the US Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour this season.

WHAT'S INSIDE





POC, Canadian firm meeting on stadium



COJUANGCO

Parrenas barges into finals

Bangon takes up cudgels for mayor

By Vincent Cabreza

Fighting over logs

Not to attack GMA

Rare

Islamic cleric ...

'Repulsive hearsays'

Exposing Islam's enemies

Bombings in Riyadh

'Get the big-time loggers, not small fry'

'He's a liar'

'Mayor Gapo'

Afraid 'to go up'

Turning the tables

Top 10 list

Small amounts

No fireworks, just free spa, free golf in Trump wedding

Fireworks rejected

No outshining the bride

Simple but elegant

A fan

Bridge at Banahaw's foot stands test of time

Dinner stop a bridge

Against time and elements

Taming the wild grass

Bridges to the past

Old route to Manila

Warning signs

A place in history

OFWs in Iraq hiding from RP officials sent to track them

FILIPINOS working in Iraq are refusing to come home and some even hide from Philippine government officials trying to track them down because of the growing danger of attacks as the elections there approach, officials said Saturday.

Administrator Marianito Roque of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration said only 49 Filipinos have so far taken advantage of an Owwa program under which they would be repatriated due to safety concerns.

There are around 6,000 Filipinos working in Iraq, many of whom went there despite a government ban imposed last year.

"The Filipinos even hide (from government officials) because they do not want to return," Roque said.

Kuwait-based labor attaché Angelo Jimenez was in Iraq to track down undocumented Filipino workers who had entered the country despite the ban, said Stella Banawis of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Manila had warned workers in Iraq that they were vulnerable to abduction and attacks ahead of the country's elections on Jan. 30 and should seek help from the Philippine Embassy.

The government cited the case of accountant Robert Tarongoy, who remains in the hands of Iraqi militants more than two months after he and an American were kidnapped in Iraq.

Despite the ban, numerous Filipinos continue to seek work in Iraq, many of them with civilian firms providing services for United States forces.

After the government penalized some local firms for sending workers to Iraq despite the ban, foreign employment firms resorted to recruiting the Filipinos in the countries neighboring Iraq, Banawis said.

"What the foreign employers do now is they are hiring the unemployed Filipino workers from Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Turkey and in other neighboring countries... so the Filipinos now are not recruited from the Philippines," Banawis said.

The higher salaries for work in Iraq were still too much of a lure, she said.

The Philippines had asked countries bordering Iraq to help prevent Filipino nationals from entering that country.

Despite the threats, the government has said that ordering an evacuation of Filipinos from Iraq remains only a last, emergency measure. *AFP*

Amatong was not fired; revamp still up in the air

MALACAÑANG yesterday confirmed the resignation of Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong but gave no other details about a revamp in the Cabinet this year.

"Secretary Amatong has been a valuable team player who played a key role in the fiscal program, and there are others equally qualified in terms of patriotism and competence," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Bunye's statement virtually confirmed reports circulating last week about a revamp in President Macapagal-Arroyo's economic team. Aside from Amatong, Energy Secretary Vince Perez is reportedly resigning from the Cabinet.

On Friday, Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima confirmed that he was moving over to the finance department vice Amatong. Malacañang is reportedly talking to Juan Santos, former chief of Nestlé Philippines, to take over from Purisima at the Department of Trade and Industry.

Socio-Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said Amatong was neither fired nor asked to resign but was simply due for retirement.

"No, no, no. Secretary Amatong has done a very good job and she was an excellent finance secretary," said Neri in an interview over RMN radio.

Neri said there had been no talk about changes in the economic management team or the Cabinet in general during Malacañang meetings, including the last one held on Friday.

The President indicated last year that she would have two new faces in the economic team.

But when asked recently about the revamp, she was evasive, saying only that there was a continuous assessment of Cabinet members' performance and the new year was a good time to make the assessments. *Juliet Labog-Javellana*

5.4 quake hits South

A 5.4-magnitude earthquake struck the southern Philippines early Saturday, a seismology official said.

The quake struck at 1:54 a.m. and was centered about 184 km under the Celebes Sea, 115 km southeast of General Santos City in Mindanao.

"Earthquakes of this magnitude are common in the area, but most of the time they are not felt because they are very deep," said seismologist Joan Salcedo of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

Phivolcs reported no damage or aftershocks from the quake, caused by the movement of the local Sangihe Trench.

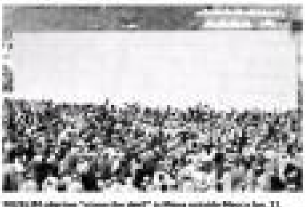
The Hong Kong Observatory, which monitors seismic activity in the region, measured the quake at 5.6 magnitude.

The Philippines is along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," where earthquakes and volcanic activity are common. A magnitude 7.7 earthquake in 1990 killed nearly 2,000 people on Luzon. *AP*

The WORLD

WHO expects bird flu human transfer

8 Chinese hostages in Iraq freed



Many pilgrims stone Bush, the 'devil,' in Mecca ritual

Gay district planned in conservative US city

Tsunami-hit province may need another month to remove corpses



FVR top guest in Konica Minolta Celebrity Pro-Am



RAMOS



BRAVO

'We will bounce back,' promise Turbo Chargers



TNT poised for sweep over Shell

More on Jordan's formula of success

SPECTATOR

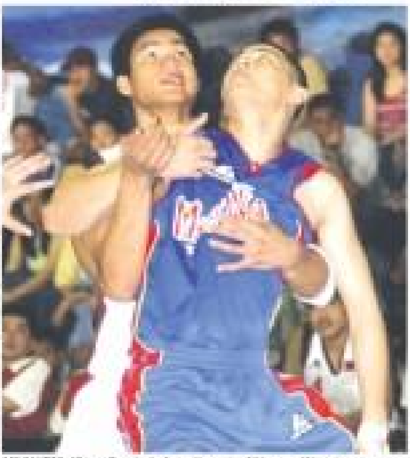


Caddies' golf entries pass one hundred



Lady Knights face Tigresses

By Maryang B. Castillo



ARVI SANTOS of Granny Goose jostles for position against Al Magpayo of Montaña.

Red Star Rising, Empire King, West Bound clash again today

By Edwin Villanueva, Contributor

EMPIRE King and West Bound are riding high on their big season-ending wins, while Red Star Rising hopes to finally redeem himself following two heartbreaking finishes the last time around.



RP MARATHON FOR PASIG: Australian Dave Cundy (second from right) of the Association of International Marathons and Road Races calibrates the Jones counter to be used in measuring the 42-km route of the 1st Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River on Feb. 27.

Torre enters Tanauan tilt

SPORTSWATCH

Antonio ties for 8th-9th in Montreal

Fisterama features bantam title fight

Ringside TV Boxing on ABC-5

Paragua, Mariano head Filway Open bets



PARAGUA: Good practice



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION



Cease fire

EDITORIAL

[illegible]

Titles for self-esteem

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

[illegible]

God calling, you listening?

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

[illegible]

Why not Parayno at Finance?

REVEILLE



Ramon J. Farolan

A man and a town

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

Should we give up on people power?

PUBLIC LIVES



Randy David

Birth joys

HIGH BLOOD

THEY SAID

Rosary-armed rangers

TALK of the TOWN



Where will the masses turn for hope?

A GROUP of professionals seeking long-term change in the country claims that the country's leaders have not made a difference to the lives of the poor over the past four decades.

Pagbabago@Pilipinas says that the highly skewed income distribution shows that nothing much has changed in the way people gain access to the country's resources.

The group likens the Philippines to an atoll of high-income class, an island of middle-income class and a vast sea of low-income class.

It says that in 2000 the richest 1 percent (some 150,000 families) had a combined income equivalent to the total income of the bottom 58 percent (some 5.8 million families).

Inequality may in fact be getting worse, according to Pagbabago. In 1990, the richest 20 percent had income 13 times that of the poorest 20 percent. Ten years later, the ratio had worsened to 16 times.

Despite the 10-point program of the Arroyo administration, Pagbabago sees no significant improvement in the lot of the poor, raising the possibility that they may turn elsewhere for salvation.

Malacañang, of course, has a different view. It says that poverty had been reduced from 44.2 percent in 1985 to 28.4 percent in 2000 and that the people rating themselves as poor dropped from 58 percent in December 2000 to 48 percent last month.

People's patience wearing thin

By Mario Taguiwalo

Share of total income

Group	[illegible]	[illegible]
Upper [illegible] percent families	[illegible] percent	[illegible] percent
Lower [illegible] percent families	[illegible] percent	[illegible] percent

'It's the economy, stupid'

By Rigoberto D. Tiglao

INQUIRER *Mindanao*

Historians safeguard Butuan's ancient site

THE AREA is extremely ordinary—an out-of-the-way dirt road with rice paddies on both sides. But for archaeologists and historians, it is a major historical spot that may add to the city's prestige as Mindanao's historic gateway.

[illegible]



THE PILOT whale rescued in Sarangani Bay

Sarangani shore folk save pilot whale

INSTEAD of butchering a pilot whale, shoreline residents together with Gov. Miguel Dominguez of Sarangani province helped the mammal swim back to sea on Jan. 10.

[illegible]

Turkish group sacrifices 450 cows

[illegible]

Across the NATION

Dam faces closure over unpaid taxes

GMA vows to finish airport on Panglao



VIGAN DAWN

The streets of Vigan City, Ilocos Sur, emit a warm glow at dawn. The city is on the list of the Unesco's heritage sites.

PMA execs bar cadets from going downtown

Unpaid SSS loans in North Luzon reach ₱300M

Farmer says he's ready to face NPA death sentence



VENDING FUN

20 find way to PNP without taking test

Bishop slams extension of gambling franchise

More sufferings

Gambling ABC

Villagers say they'll arm selves vs labor order



PROTESTERS

Suspected assassin guards 'hanging judge'

Child's family appeals for help for key surgery

Cops demolish ex-sex workers' stalls

Editor's note

[illegible]

Mourning …





[illegible]

Enduring message

[illegible]

Strong, silent type

[illegible]

Not just a 2-hour hero

[illegible]

Rise from poverty

[illegible]

Nothing fancy

[illegible]







Ridiculed

[illegible]



Power with grace

[illegible]

Sadness with no name

[illegible]

An hour's work for soldiers adds up …

[illegible]

E-mail: [illegible]@inquirer.com.ph

Sunday Biz

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Gov. Paeng bids farewell



THE MONETARY Board with BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura (third from left): Antonio Abacan Jr., Raul Boncan Sr., Finance Sec. Juanita D. Amatong, Melito S. Salazar Jr., Juan Quintos Jr., Vicente Valdepeñas Jr.

WE ATTENDED the annual reception for the banking community tendered by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas governor. This year was more significant as it will be the last of BSP Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura whose six-year term ends by the middle of the year.

Co-terminus with him are several members of the Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the BSP. During the reception, he called on each MB member and introduced the newest, Raul Boncan Sr., a former undersecretary of trade and industry.

As to who will take Buenaventura's place is still anybody's guess. Rumor has it that Securities and Exchange Commission chair Fe Barin might become the new BSP governor. Or it could be deputy governor Amando Tetangco. But in a country where major decisions are based on politics, who knows?

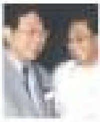
Barin stayed until there were only a handful of guests around.

One source who was present expressed surprise that Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo and several Court of Appeals justices were there.

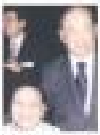
Former Finance Secretary and MB member Jose T. Pardo also attended.

Banco de Oro chair Teresita Sy, who was hounded by reporters during last year's reception because of the issue of Banco de Oro buying shares of Equitable-PCIBank, was overheard kidding Equitable chair Antonio Go that she has been "courting" him for a year and yet no answer. Go replied with a blush and some excuse that he was a married man.

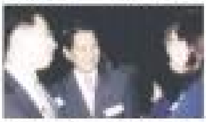
It was a very well attended affair held at [illegible] although for the second straight year [illegible]. M.Q. Espino



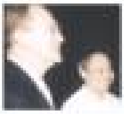
MONETARY Board member Melito S. Salazar Jr. (left), with Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr., chair, Export and Industry Bank



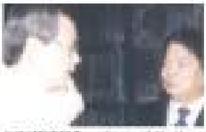
FORMER CB deputy governor Escolastica Bince and former BSP Governor Gabriel C. Singson.



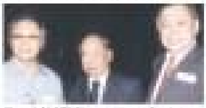
NESTOR Tan of Banco de Oro, Antonio Abacan of Metrobank, and BSP director Corazon Guerrero



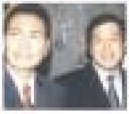
BUENAVENTURA with Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo



AMBASSADOR Tomas Alcantara (left) with BSP Deputy Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr.



(From left) BSP Director Nestor Garcia, former BSP Governor Gabriel C. Singson and BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes



MIKE Aguilar of Standard Chartered Bank and [illegible] of Chinatrust Phils. Commercial Bank Corp.

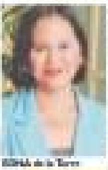
Dagupan couple mixes business, domestic life

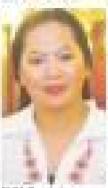




PINOY ENTREPRENEUR

A tale of two modern-day Cinderellas





E-mail, Internet, remain alien to many of RP's HS students



Insurance firm posts hike in premium income



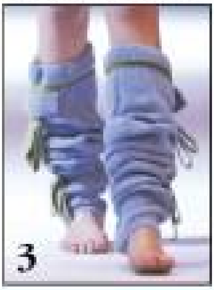
How knit!



1



2



3



4

Literary angst



By Gilda Cordero-Fernando

Part I

Superiority complex



I never really considered what 'my role should be as a writer.' I was just too busy trying to become one

Writing mentors



Better grammar

The man and mind behind multiple intelligences

Dr. Howard Gardner, best-selling author of 'Multiple Intelligences,' is coming to Manila

Work

Formidable, friendly



Dining a la card

American Express comes up with a treat for Pinoy diners



Electronic pleasures on exhibit









VALDES family



PRIETO family

Family—for life!



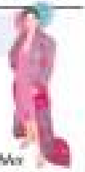








TESSA!



Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Every four or five years, the descendants of Teresa de la Paz—members of the Tuason-Legarda-Prieto-Valdes families—hold a grand reunion. This year was our fifth









Fed up with her husband's betrayal

EMILY'S POST



Emily A. Marcelo

Sto. Niño de Providencia miracle marks 13th year

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Darang

JANUARY 27 is a special day for all devotees of the Sto. Niño de Providencia because it was that day in 1992 when the Sto. Niño began spilling oil from His body in the house of the late Corazon Gonzales on 65 Pijuan St., BF Resort Village, Las Piñas. This year is the 13th year of the miracle.

At that time there was no chapel yet, but the miraculous image was enthroned in an altar inside the house. Oil was spilling everywhere in the morning of Jan. 27. Auntie Azon (as Gonzales was called) and her daughter did not know what to do. So they asked the nuns belonging to the Eucharistic Disciples of St. Pius X in Philamlife Village to come and help. Much later, the towels used to absorb the oil on the floor were wiped on the sick who would come to pray to the Sto. Niño. They got well. Auntie Azon had a chapel built at the right side of the house which Msgr. Josefino Ramirez blessed on June 16, 1992.

The miraculous oil was collected in a carafe placed below the right side of the Sto. Niño now wrapped in thick wads of cotton. The oil continues to drip to this day, and transferred into tiny bottles and given to the sick.

Since 1992, people have not stopped coming to ask for healing. Terminally ill patients are still alive. Betsy Reyes, who had cancer of the breast, was cured and now serves during yearly processions.

Lorna Gonzales told me her mother bought the image in Tayuman, Sta. Cruz, in 1988. When the miracle happened, Auntie Azon went back to Tayuman, but could not find the store anymore. People in the area told her there was never a store in the place where she bought the image.

It has been 10 years since I have been writing about the Sto. Niño revealing stories of miracles that happened through the years. For instance, women who had difficulty conceiving got their wish after they prayed to the Child Jesus.

My brother Pompeyo Darang Jr. experienced a miracle when he began to suffer from kidney renal failure. I brought him to the chapel and there we prayed for help. When he went back to Laoag thinking that he would die there, the Sto. Niño made it possible for him to be brought to Lorma Hospital in San Fernando, La Union, where he underwent an operation for the insertion of a "pistula" where the dialysis could come through. It was a miracle that my brother Abe had the money for the operation.

Pompeyo is becoming better as he undergoes dialysis twice a week. Back in his job, Pompeyo will go to the fiesta to say "thank you."

Street Mass on Jan. 27

Msgr. Felipe Ocol, parish priest of Mary Mother of the Church Parish in BF Resort Village, will celebrate Mass with Fr. Abet Banayon on Pijuan Street on Jan. 27 at 8 a.m. Other priests will come to anoint the sick with the miraculous oil of the Sto. Niño. They are Fr. Pio Lumibao, OSB; Fr. Basil Apostol, OSB, whose mother was healed; Fr. Joseph Sou, an Indonesian priest who is chaplain at the Medical Center Manila; Fr. Joseph Tachner, SVD, who will come all the way from Naguilian, La Union; and Fr. Fred Reyes, SVD.

The priests will also concelebrate the 3 p.m. Mass in the church. The motorcade bringing the Sto. Niño to the church will start at 2 p.m. Volunteers who call themselves "Servants of the Sto. Niño de Providencia" will lead in the procession. At least 10,000 people are expected to attend, some coming from Cotabato, Davao and Bacolod. Those who wish to help procure food and drinks can text Lorna at 0918-9181077. Thank you for your kindness.

God Loves is 14

God Loves Catholic Prayer Community celebrates its 14th year with a concelebrated Mass on Jan. 29, 3 p.m., at the Philam Homes Clubhouse in Quezon City. The celebrants are Fr. Domie Guzman, spiritual director; Fr. Mario Sobrejuanite, Fr. Pabs Tagura and Fr. Gene Bacarena. Registration is at 2 pm.

The celebration will be headed by the pastoral team composed of Bro. Robert Castañeda, Bro. Ricky Berenguer, Bro. Jess Santos, Sr. Filaine Tan and Fr. Domie Guzman, SSP.

Please text Sr. Beth at 0918-9215632. For info on the next Life in the Spirit Seminar on April 9, text Sr. Filaine at 0917-8100935 or Sr. Marie at 0917-904-1264.

San Ildefonso Mass

For the first time in the history of San Ildefonso Parish in Bulacan, the town plaza was filled with at least 2,000 people during the first Novena Mass to San Ildefonso last Jan. 14, according to Dr. Gil Villacorte, fiesta caretaker, and engineer Paul Cruz, a member of the Hermandad de San Ildefonso.

On the morning of Jan. 14, people waited along a stretch of 15 km for the arrival of the relic of San Ildefonso brought by the Pope's Mobile. First, the relic was brought to the Sacred Heart Parish in Pinaod where it was welcomed by Fr. Johann Sebastian; then to Mayor Edgardo Galvez at the Municipal Hall; and finally to the church.

Bishop Jose Oliveros will officiate in the concelebrated Mass today at 9 a.m. The procession is at 8:30 p.m. Try to catch it by taking the Sta. Rita exit from the North Expressway. Come and whisper prayers to San Ildefonso.

Fatima visit

Here's an update of the visit of the international pilgrim image of Our Lady of Fatima: Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Bulletin Street, West Triangle (Jan. 23-24); Our Lady of Fatima Parish (Jan. 24-25); and The Most Holy Redeemer Parish, Malac Street, Masambong, Quezon City (Jan. 25-26).

The image recently graced the Diocesan Eucharistic and Marian Congress held at the Diocesan Center, Lantana Street, Cubao. The Philippines will bid her farewell with a Mass to be celebrated by His Excellency, Cubao Bishop Honesto F. Ongtioco, DD, on Jan. 26, 5 p.m., at The Most Holy Redeemer Parish, Masambong, Quezon City.

How to get well

Dr. Teresa Bitanga Valeros, doctor of nutrimedicine and natural healthcare practitioner, says what you eat makes you either well or sick. Her healthcare program focuses on cleansing and nourishing the body, mind and spirit. She believes in fighting disease the natural way by using natural medicines and a strict diet from forbidden foods and drinks. She treated a cancer patient with natural medicine and she got well.

The Messages from Heaven Foundation, which offers Dr. Valeros' health care services, helps priests and nuns who are sick, old and dying.

There's a solution, she says, to every health problem; a method to stay young and have better energy. Call 8072267 or 8217672.



LORNA Gonzales (second from left) with devotees Val Ramos and his children Apple and Michael

Artificial limbs available

Those who need artificial limbs because they cannot stand or walk can call Penny Bondoc at PGH Rehab 5264357 or UERM at 7160025. These free artificial limbs are offered until tomorrow.

Botolan, Zambales fiesta

The feast day of the Ina Poon Bato will be celebrated today in Mary Hill, Sitio Rosaban, Barangay Poon na Bato in Botolan, Zambales. Zambales Bishop Florentino Labarias will celebrate the Mass with Msgr. Chris Cacho, Fr. Larry Farraon, and Fr. Joey Corpus at 4:30 p.m.

The devotion is propagated by the Ina Poon Bato Foundation led by Roselyn Magsaysay. The foundation sponsors the 12 nn Mass every second and Saturday of the month in Greenhills, San Juan. Call 4110874.

Attractive bridal packages

HOTEL PonteFino, the only deluxe hotel in Batangas City, welcomes bookings for wedding receptions at its recently opened air-conditioned tent.

The tent can accommodate up to 500 people and is also ideal for cocktails, product launches, conventions and seminars, concerts and other special events. Located in the heart of the city, Hotel PonteFino is near the international port and is a convenient one-and-half-hour drive from Manila through the Star Tollway.

Smart couples will enjoy the value-for-money wedding package that Hotel PonteFino has adapted to the needs of the modern bride and groom.

With a reasonable package of P100,000 for a minimum of 100 persons, couples can enjoy the following irresistible benefits: choice of western, Chinese or Filipino buffet, an overnight stay at the Fino suite for the bride and groom with continental breakfast, a three-layered fondant cake, a bridal car with floral arrangement, a bottle of sparkling wine for toasting, floral center piece for the presidential and buffet table, place cards for VIP tables, guest book, state of the art audio equipment including free use of DVD or VHS with wide screen, stage, dance floor and podium, a special gift for the newlyweds from Hotel PonteFino and a gift certificate worth P1,000 for the hotel's Robusta restaurant where they can enjoy Chef Dennis Edillon's popular new Batangas cuisine.

Couples can also choose from a variety of other wedding packages to suit their specific needs.

Hotel PonteFino is located at Pastor Village, Gulod Labac, Batangas City. Call 4372103, 4213466 or (043) 7233466. Visit www.pontefino.com.ph

4th Forbes wedding fair Feb. 5-6

THE FOURTH "May Kasal Sa Forbes Park, A Wedding Affair" brings together once again selected wedding suppliers Feb. 5-6 at Santuario de San Antonio Parish Center, Forbes Park, Makati City.

For two days, soon-to-wed couples can have direct consultations with professional coordinators, designers and stylists to help them prepare for the important occasion.

Special features are banquet setups by caterers who have packages to suit different budgets and a special centerpiece by event stylist Henry Pascual.

Call Philtrade Exhibits at 8250804 or 8253482.

Haribon promotes nature conservation through sports

Seeing Green



'Wild adventure 2'

Badminton cup

Thorns don't a cactus make

Green tips



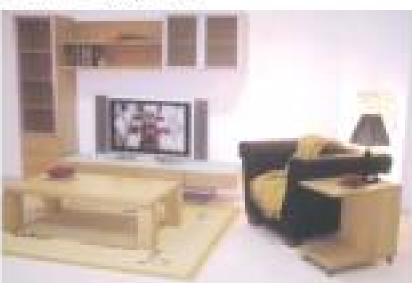
Distinguishing traits

Two cacti types

Home pieces in natural shades











Voltaire Laureto and Jean Fontiveros take their vows at the same altar where they had been participants in countless liturgical rites

THE ENTOURAGE

LAURETO-FONTIVEROS NUPTIALS

Finding their love in the faith

By Gloria [illegible]
Contributor

HE had been serving his parish, San Fernando de Dilao, in Paco, Manila, since boyhood. As a student at Paco Catholic School, he would find time on weekdays and Sundays to don the sacristan's robes to assist at Mass, handling the water and wine cruets during the Offertory, shaking the tinkling bell to signal the reverential rites of the Consecration, handling the paten for the people lining up for Communion.

Voltaire Laureto beckoned by to assist the officiating priest during Baptism and the more solemn ritual of Confirmation performed by the visiting bishop. Even in the dead of night, if necessary, he was at the beck and call of the priest performing the last rites for the dead or dying.

He was also in the vanguard of processions with the other members of the parish's Knights of the Altar, during the Holy Week rituals, from Palm Sunday's blessing of the palm fronds, the Good Friday Via Crucis throughout the parish, as well as the high point of the Holy Week which is the Easter procession—and also the subsequent fiesta procession in August—that brought the carroza of the parish patron, Our Lord of the Holy Sepulchre, to the constituent barangays of the large Paco community. The years saw him outgrowing the sacristan's traditional attire.

For a long time Voltaire was a member of the Knights of the Altar, but eventually he assumed more responsible roles among his peers as his trustworthiness and discipline were singled out. He was admitted to the prestigious Knights of Columbus, among venerable parish elders, and his scope of parish involvement broadened to include those projects and/or socials that called for interaction with female parish members.

Close ties

And that was how his friendship and eventual close ties with the pretty Jean M. Fontiveros of the lectors and commentators group came about.

As early as 1994, when Jean first started serving at Mass as an aspirant lector/commentator, the two would find themselves involved in the same Mass rites, the frequency of their joint participation beginning to follow what one would consider the inevitability of God's plan for them.

Not that he never got to meet other girls elsewhere—in his workplace at the American Credit Card Company in Ortigas, at social gatherings outside the parish, in seminars and conferences, as well as the occasional parish excursions.

Jean held a responsible position as supervisor for the Treasury Division of the First Metro Investment Corp., an investment house of Metrobank Corp. She was never in any want of potential suitors in her own workplace, where she had been connected since 1998.

But that was not written in God's plan. And so on April 17, 1997, Voltaire and Jean became engaged to one another.

Seven years later (yes, seven!) Voltaire, son of Victorio and Virginia (nee Pineda)—both members of Couples for Christ, took for his bride Jean, daughter of Gilberto and Carmen M. Fontiveros. The ceremony was held on Dec. 11, on the eve of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in the parish of Voltaire's boyhood.

At the same altar setting where they had been participants in countless liturgical rites, they were joined in Holy Matrimony at 2 p.m. in rites officiated by Fr. Ronald M. [illegible], former parochial vicar who had seen them (especially Voltaire) grow up and grow wise in the service of the Lord.

Jean wore a gown by Nick [illegible], while Voltaire's barong was fashioned by his own father, who is said to be the favorite tailor of the Belgian missionaries who served in the parish.



NEWLYWEDS Voltaire and Jean Laureto at the reception at CCP's Silangan Hall

Entourage

Their wedding entourage reflected their Church-oriented choices: many had been or are still active in parish work.

Best Man Jay D. [illegible] was [illegible] commentator like Jean. Cord sponsors were Enrique Raymund C. Ocampo, former organizer of the Chiro Youth Movement, now studying for the priesthood, and Voltaire's sister Vivian, who teaches at Paco Catholic School.

Groomsmen Melvin Ocampo, candle sponsor Atty. Justino Felix Campaña, and veil sponsor Ronald M. Fontiveros are all former members of the Knights of the Altar. (Other secondary sponsors were [illegible] T. Uy, Cynthia R. [illegible], and Vivian D. Laureto.)

The list of principal sponsors included Paco parish leaders, led by former and current parish priests Bishop Teodoro C. Bacani Jr. and Msgr. Domingo A. [illegible] Jr., and former Grand Knight of Columbus Joselito C. Mendoza.

Others were Esmeralda Basas, head of the parish education ministry, Evangeline F. Palma, veteran instructor at Paco Catholic School, [illegible] Gloria Carpio, former special minister of the Holy Eucharist, and this writer, former editor of the parish newsletter and fiesta souvenir program.

Indeed the entire entourage, down to the ushers and [illegible], belonged to families who have lived and served in the parish practically all their lives—the Campañas, Pinedas, Balabas, Mendozas, Del Rosarios, Uys, Gonzaleses, [illegible], Espiris, Ocampos, Carpios. Their forebears had pioneered in the supportive involvement with the pastoral work of the early Belgian CICM missionaries of [illegible] war days.

It is in the context of this involvement that Voltaire and Jean, picking up the tradition of their forebears, found their love, which they proclaimed so beautifully in the following quotation, printed on their wedding invitation:

"This is the true measure of love, when we believe that we alone can love, that no one could ever have loved so before us, and that no one will ever love the same way after us."



WITH Bishop Bacani



THE LAURETOS with parents Gilberto and Carmen Fontiveros (left) and Victorio and Virginia Laureto (right)



Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Badian, island haven in Cebu

Text and photos by Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE ISLAND of Badian, so near the mainland, lies 97 kms southwest of Cebu City in the Visayan Sea facing Negros Oriental. It is home to an 8-hectare, deluxe resort and spa with a white sand beachfront, attractive architecture, neat landscape, superb accommodations, dive sites, a lagoon and a channel, and coral gardens. And there's a marine sanctuary on the other side of the island.



Badian island haven in Cebu

> The ambience at this resort is soothing and restful. The silence is broken only by low conversation, the hum of passing speedboats and the twitter of birds

Amenities

Seafront spa

Calm mornings

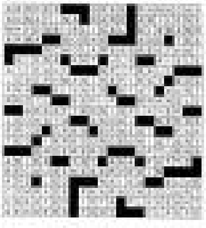


COZY junior suites accommodate small families.

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Suites available at half price

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



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